

BLACK DIAMOND  
WESTERN

# BLACK DIAMOND

## WESTERN

FEB.  
NO. 54

LEV GLEASON, Editor and Publisher

DON'T REACH FOR  
THAT GUN, SHERIFF!  
I WARNED YOU!

BLACK DIAMOND.  
WHAT MADE YUH  
TURN OWLHOOT?

WANTED  
FOR MURDER!





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# WANTED: BLACK DIAMOND



**I**T WAS AS UNBELIEVABLE AS A NIGHTMARE... BUT THE BLACK DIAMOND HAD A PRICE ON HIS HEAD! THE WILD WEST'S FOREMOST FIGHTER AGAINST INJUSTICE HAD TURNED CRIMINAL AND KILLER! HE HAD MURDERED INNOCENT PEOPLE IN COLD BLOOD—DEFIED THE LAW HE'D SWORN TO UPHOLD—AND TAKEN AN OATH OF ENMITY AGAINST THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE! CLEARLY THE BLACK DIAMOND HAD GONE MAD—FOR WHY ELSE WOULD LAWYERS PURSUE HIM DAY AND NIGHT? WHY ELSE WOULD THE LURID POSTER SCREAM...

**WANTED: BLACK DIAMOND?!!**

BOSS! WE WERE SAFE! WHY'D YUH TURN AROUND FER?

BECAUSE THE BLACK DIAMOND'S GUN IS EMPTY!! BEFORE HE RELOADS I'M GOIN' TO SQUASH THE MEDDLIN' FOOL INTO THE PRAIRIE!

**BANG!**  
**BANG!**



**I**T IS EVENING IN CARIBE COUNTY. THE MOON LOOKS DOWN COLDLY UPON A BAND OF RIDERS EMERGING FROM THE WOODS...

**N**EAR THE CHUCKWAGON A LEAN, BLACK-CLAD FIGURE TENSES...

OKAY, BOYS!  
TAKE IT!

CMON! YIPPP!  
YAAAAAA!  
YAAAAA!



**BANG!**  
**BANG!**

WHAT IN TAKNATION IS THAT?

IT'S THE OWLHOOT I'VE BEEN TELLIN' YUH ABOUT, BLACK DIAMOND! THEY BEEN 'KAIDIN' US RANCHERS EVERY NIGHT, RUSTLIN' US BLIND. THEY ARE BACK AGAIN, CUSS 'ER!



THE SUCK-EGG DOGS! THEY AIN'T LEFT US ALONE FOR A MINUTE! BUT I'LL SHOW 'EM, NO-BODY'S GOIN' TO STRIP MY RANCH BARE! I WORKED TOO LONG TOO HARD TO PUT IT TOGETHER.

UNCLE JIM! WAIT! THEY'LL TAKE A SHOT AT YOU!

IT'S THE OLD GEEZER HIMSELF! BLAST HIM!

IIIIIEEE!

BANG! BANG!

THE RIFEGATS! THEY GAVE US CORN AND WAMPOOSE! HOW'S UNCLE JIM?

HE'S DEAD DUMPER! THE KATS NEVER GAVE HIM A CHANCE! BUT THEY WON'T GET AWAY! ONE OF 'EM LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND! A HOOFP-PRINT! A CROOKED SHOE! ZIG-ZAG SHAPED! I'LL FIND THE RIDER IF IT TAKES THE REST OF MY LIFE.

THE FOLLOWING DAY ON BOOT HILL...

DID YOU SEE THE SHERIFF, BLACK DIAMOND?

I SAW HIM... AND WHAT I SAW I DIDN'T LIKE! THE LAW IN THIS COUNTY IS A JOKE! BUT ONLY THE SHERIFF IS LAUGHING! YOU KNOW WHO I SPOTTED AS HIS DEPUTIES? FIVE OF THE MOST WANTED KILLERS IN THE WEST.

CARIBE COUNTY IS AS CORRUPT AS THEY COME! IT'S PRACTICALLY A REFUGE FOR EVERY OUTLAW GANG ON THE FRONTIER.

AND YOUR JURISDICTION MEANS NOTHING IN THIS COUNTY! A BUNCH FIVE.

THE RANCHERS TOLD ME THAT CHUCK DEERING AND HIS GANG ARE HIDING OUT SOMEWHERE IN CARIBE COUNTY. THEY FIGURE DEERING IS DOING THE RUSTLING... BUT ALL PLEAS TO SHERIFF HINTON FALL ON DEAF EARS.

MAYBE HINTON'S BEING CUT IN! WHY ELSE WOULD HE GIVE COMFORT TO DEERING?

THE FOLLOWING DAY AS JIM GARRISON'S MANCRIPT RANCH IS PUT UP FOR SALE...

DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS, BLACK DIAMOND? SHERIFF HINTON BOUGHT THE RANCH FOR A SONG!

IT'S JUST THE LATEST IN A LONG LIST OF PROPERTY THEFTS! HINTON IS NOT ONLY THE MOST CROOKED AND POWERFUL MAN IN THE COUNTY BUT THE RICHEST!





MY CONDOLENCES, BLACK DIAMOND, YOUR UNCLE WAS A FINE MAN... HE'S CERTAIN TO BE AVENGED! THAT'S WHY WE HAVE SHERIFFS TO PROTECT THE LITTLE PEOPLE AGAINST THIEVES AND KILLERS!

A FAT LOT YOUR PROTECTION HELPED UNCLE JIM! WHAT'S HIS IS NOW YOURS! I'LL SQUARE THINGS MYSELF!



HOLD ON, BLACK DIAMOND! I'M THE LAW AROUND HERE! YOUR STAR AIN'T WORTH THE TIN IT'S MADE OF! SO DON'T MAKE TROUBLE! IF ANY VARMINTS ARE GONNA BE CAUGHT, I'LL CATCH 'EM! YOU BUTT OUT!

LIKE BLAZES! I KNOW WHO I'M AFTER, AND I'M GOING TO GET 'EM! C'MON, BUMPER!

A FEW DAYS LATER, IN CARIBE CITY, THE BLACK DIAMOND FINDS WHAT HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR!



A CROOKED, ZIG-ZAG SHAPED HOOFF-PRINT! THE OWLHOOTS WHO RAIDED UNCLE JIM MUST BE INSIDE, RIGHT! DRINKING! LET'S GO BUMPER!



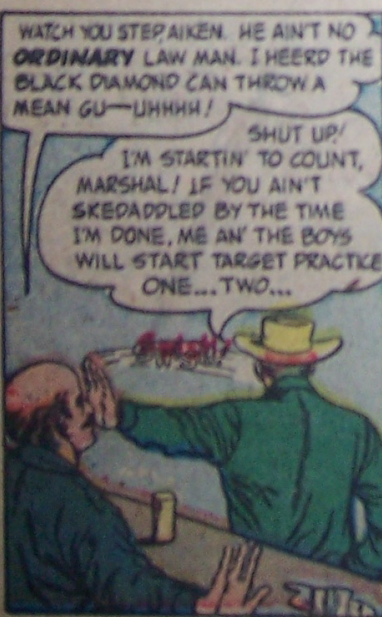
WHO OWNS THAT MILK-FACED PINTO OUTSIDE?

I DO! WHAT'S IT TO YOU, TIN STAR?



THIS, YOU'RE THE SNAKES WHO MURDERED MY UNCLE, JIM GARRISON, I'M BRINGING YOU IN TO SHERIFF HINTON. DO YOU COME QUIETLY OR DO YOU GET CARRIED OUT?

GET HIM! STANDIN' UP TO ALL FIVE OF US! LISTEN, MARSHALL... I'M GOIN' TO COUNT TILL THREE. IF YOU AIN'T OUT THAT DOOR YOU'LL BE DEADER THAN YOUR LOUSY OLD UNCLE!



WATCH YOU STEP, AIKEN. HE AIN'T NO ORDINARY LAW MAN. I HEARD THE BLACK DIAMOND CAN THROW A MEAN GU—UHHHH!

SHUT UP! I'M STARTIN' TO COUNT, MARSHAL! IF YOU AIN'T SKEDADDLED BY THE TIME I'M DONE, ME AN' THE BOYS WILL START TARGET PRACTICE ONE...TWO...



...THREE! GIVE IT TO THE GREASETAL...!



IIIIIIAAAAA !!!

(GASP!)...H-HE DRAWS LIKE LIGHTNIN'! BLAST HIM! KILL HIM!



(GASP!)...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! FIVE TO ONE...AN' YOU KILLED THEM!

THEY BROUGHT IT ON THEMSELVES! CALL SHERIFF HINTON! I'LL WAIT HERE!



SHORTLY AFTER...

IT'S NO LIE! LOOK AT THEM!

THEY DREW FIRST. I SHOT BACK IN SELF-DEFENSE I SPARED YOU A MASS HANGING, HINTON! THESE MEN MURDERED MY UNCLE JIM.



YOU'RE A LIAR! THE BARTENDER TOLD ME EVERYTHING! YOU WENT BERSEK AN' SHOT THESE HOMBRES DOWN IN COLD BLOOD! RIGHT NICK?

ER... (GULP)... YES, SHERIFF! WE ALL SAW IT! IT WAS M-MURDER!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THEY TRIED TO GUN ME!



BULL! YOU MURDERED THESE MEN... AN' YOU'LL HANG FOR IT! I WARNED YOU TO KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF TROUBLE! BUT YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN! NOW RAISE 'EM!

I GET IT NOW, YOU'RE IN WITH THESE OWLHOOTS! MAYBE YOU'RE THEIR TOP MAN!



I TOLD YOU YOU WERE LOCO, BLACK DIAMOND! YOU GOT A BIG MOUTH, AN' A PRYIN' NOSE! THAT LEADS TO TROUBLE EVERYTIME WALK TO THE DOOR!

AN' NO FUSS! MAKE A WRONG MOVE, AN' WE'LL SHOVEL YOU OFF THE FLOOR.



BUT A SECOND LATER...

CRACKKK

NICE WORK BUMPER.

I'M SURE YOU'RE ONE OF THE WREKING HINTON. I CAN'T PROVE IT NOW, BUT I INTEND TO STICK AROUND TILL I DO. CHON, BUMPER!

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, BLACK DIAMOND! I WON'T REST TILL I SEE YOU DANCIN' AT THE END OF A ROPE. (GASP!) I'LL HAVE THE WHOLE FRONTIER AFTER YOU!



THE FOLLOWING DAY...

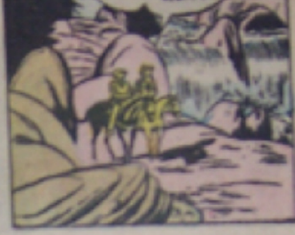
WIM... HINTON MEANS HIS THREAT. HE'LL HAVE HUNDREDS OF THESE POSTERS NAILED UP AROUND THE COUNTY. EVERYBODY'LL BE OUT TO MAKE A QUICK \$5,000!

NOT EVERYBODY, BUMPER! THE GOOD CITIZENS KNOW MY REPUTATION. IT'S THE OWL-HOOTS WHO'LL BE ON OUR NECKS!



BUT AN OWL-HOOT'S BULLET IS NO FUN TO DODGE EITHER!

NO BUMPER, BUT WE'LL DISH IT OUT AS HARD AS WE GET IT! NOTHING MORE DISCOURAGING TO A COVARD THAN A BELLYFULL OF LEAD! WHEN THEY SEE HOW EXPENSIVE IT IS TO GET US, THEY'LL QUIT!



IN THE DAYS THAT PASSES THE BLACK DIAMOND BECOMES THE TARGET OF EVERY SIDEWINDER IN CARIBE COUNTY...

BUT THE OUTSIDE PROVES NO BETTER THAN THE INSIDE! WHEREVER THE BLACK DIAMOND GOES HE IS PURSUED BY WANTED POSTERS... AND VOLLEYS OF LEAD!



DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY! THEY'RE WORTH \$5,000!

GOODBYE!

GET THE HORSES, BUMPER! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!



THEY KNOW US HERE, TOO! THEY KNOW US EVERYWHERE. MAYBE WE OUGHT TO GET OUT OF CARIBE COUNTY!

AND LET HINTON RULE THE ROOST? I'LL HANG FIRST!

A FEW DAYS LATER OUTSIDE OF CARIBE CITY...

AS SOON AS WE REACH THE RIM WE'LL BE SAFE, BUMPER. WE CAN HOLE UP FOR A FEW DAY WITHOUT ANYBODY FINDING US!

OKAY, B.D. BUT IT KEEPS TURNING OVER IN MY MIND!—HOW DO WE GET INTO A SLOT LIKE THIS? WHAT'RE WE DOING HERE, HIDING OUT LIKE CRIMINALS WITH EVERY GUN-CARRIER IN THE TERRITORY LOOKING FOR US! IT'S CRAZY, B.D.! **CRAZY!**



HINTON'S WANTED POSTERS HAVE FOLLOWED US LIKE **SHADOWS!** HE'S BREAKED US WHIT THE BRAND OF KILLERS AND ITS **STUCK!** WE HAVE TO LIVE LIKE PHANTOMS, CHASED FROM ONE END OF THE COUNTY TO THE OTHER.

IT ONLY PROVES THAT HINTON IS AFRAID OF US, BUMPER! THAT'S WHY HE WANTS US DEAD!





BUT WE CAN'T FIGHT BACK WHEN WE ARE EXHAUSTED THE HORSES ARE POOPED. THEY WON'T BE WORTH A DARN IF WE HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER FOR IT. WE'LL REST A FEW DAYS HERE... FIGURE THINGS OUT...

THAT'S BLACK DIAMOND, ALRIGHT! YOU CAN SPOT HIM A MILE, BY THAT BIG GALLOOT WHO'S ALWAYS WITH HIM!

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE BUMPER! HE'S AS DEADLY AS THE BLACK DIAMOND WHEN HE'S RILED UP. YUH GOTTA HAND IT TO HINTON! HE HAD THE MARGHAL FIGGERED RIGHT! HINTON KNEW HE'D HEAD FOR THE RIM TO REST!

QUIET! THEY ARE GETTING CLOSER! REMEMBER... WAIT TILL THEY DISMOUNT THEN WE'LL HAVE THEM, COLD!



OKAY, MARSHAL THROW 'EM UP! YOU, TOO, WALKRUS-FACE! IF YOU BLINK AN EYELASH, YOU GET IT!

H-HINTON'S DEPUTIES!  
...GASP...

THAT WAS A NICE PIECE OF SHOOTIN' YOU DONE IN CARIBE CITY, LAST TUESDAY, MARSHAL, YOU BLASTED YOUR WAY OUT OF A STEEL TRAP! NOT ONE MAN IN A HUNDRED COULD'VE DONE IT.

IS THAT WHY YOU CAME HERE? TO COMPLIMENT ME?

NO BLACK DIAMOND! WE AIN'T PINNING NO MEDAL ON YOU! HINTON FIGGERED YOU'D BE COMIN THIS WAY. WE'RE BRINGIN' YOU IN FOR TRIAL! TURN AROUND! BACKS TO US!

HINTON IS NO FAIR TRIAL TYPE. THEY'LL THEN LEAD OUR BACKS ARE TURNED! WE GOT TO CATCH BUMPER'S EYE!



WE'RE WANTIN' MARSHAL! DO YOU TURN OR DO WE LET YOU HAVE IT NOW?

BUMPER CAUGHT AN EYE! HE KNOWS WHAT'S COMING!

OKAY B.D! GET EM!

...GASP... THEY'RE GONNA SHOOT IT OUT!

HEEE!

BANG!  
BANG!





BUMPER CHECK THE ONE THAT WENT OVER THE SIDE!

EEEEIII!!



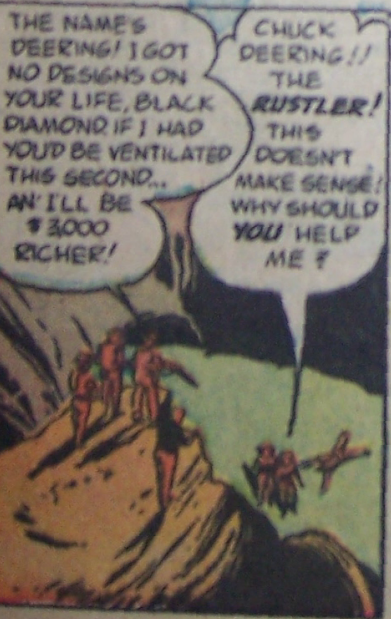
DEAD AS A DOORNAIL! I DON'T PITY THEM, BD! WE'D BE NOTCHES ON THEIR GUNS IF WE HADN'T SLAPPED LEATHER!

BUT WHEN THESE OWL-HOOTS DON'T SHOW UP IN TOWN, HINTON WILL KNOW SOMETHING 'BACKFIRED.' WE'LL COME BACK TO INVESTIGATE... WITH HIS POSSE, OF COURSE!



HINTON LIKES EVERYTHING TO BE LEGAL INCLUDING MURDER! WHAT A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE! A MURDERER HIDING BEHIND THE BADGE OF A SHERIFF'S AUTHORITY! WHEN WILL PEOPLE KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT HINTON?

SOME KNOW IT RIGHT NOW!



THE NAME'S DEERING! I GOT NO DESIGNS ON YOUR LIFE, BLACK DIAMOND IF I HAD YOU'D BE VENTILATED THIS SECOND... AN I'LL BE \$3000 RICHER!

CHUCK DEERING!! THE RUSTLER! THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! WHY SHOULD YOU HELP ME?



BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT FELLOW! WE'RE BOTH ACCUSED OF THINGS WE DIDN'T DO! I AINT SAYIN' I DON'T LAY MY HANDS ON A DIRTY BUCK HERE AN THERE... BUT I'VE BEEN AN ANGEL SINCE I CAME TO CARIDE COUNTY.

ON THE LAM, EH?



ON THE LAM, I HEARD CARIDE COUNTY IS A SANCTUARY FOR HOT OWLHOOTS. BUT ITS A LIE! ONLY OWLHOOTS WHO JOIN HINTON'S RENEWAL ARE ALLOWED! BUT I AINT THE KINDA HONBRE WHO PULLS A TRIGGER FER ANYBODY BUT NUMBER ONE!

PROFESSIONAL PRIDE?

NOPE... JUST LIKE TO BE IN BUSINESS FOR MYSELF. WHEN I TURNED DOWN HINTON'S PROPOSITION TO WORK FOR HIM, HE TURNED UGLY. THEN I BEGAN TO HEAR RUMORS. HOW I BEEN RUSTLIN' CATTLE! HOW I HELD UP STAGE-COACHES! HOW I BEEN RAIDERING THE EL MUERTE SILVER MINE!



AN' ME... ALL I BEEN DOIN' ALL DAY IS SNOOZIN' AN' BOOZIN'... PLAYIN' CARDS AN' DREAMIN'... AN' I RESENT BEIN' BLAMED FOR A MESS OF STICKUPS AN' KILLIN'S I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH!

YOU TOUCH MY HEART, DEERING! EVERY VEIN BLEEDS FOR YOU...



I KNOW YOU AINT GOT MUCH SYMPATHY FOR ME MARSHAL... EVEN THOUGH I NEVER KILLED A MAN... EXCEPT IN SELF-DEFENSE. LIKE IN A BRAWL. I AINT DENYIN' I'M A CROOK AN' AM... WHERE OUTSIDE OF CARIBE COUNTY YOU CAN RUN ME IN...

IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE SOMEDAY... SO YOU WANT TO JOIN FORCES WITH ME IN NAILING HINTON?



RIGHT FACT IS—ME AN MY BOYS WERE COVERIN' HINTON'S GALOOTS FROM BEHIND IF THEY'D THROWN ANY LEAD AT YOU. WE'D HAVE CASHIERED 'EM! BUT I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU CAN DO YOUR OWN CASHIERIN'!

I CAN... BUT I CAN'T DENY YOUR HELP IN CRASHING HINTON!



**THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AT DEERING'S HIDEOUT...**

NOW MY IDEA IS THIS—THERE'S NOTHING LIKE CATCHIN' A CROOK WITH THE GOODS. LIKE YOU KNOW, LATELY A BAND OF OWLHOOTS HAVE BEEN ROBBIN' THE EL MUERTE SILVER SHIPMENTS... AN' I'M BLAMED FOR IT!

I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU DEERING. WE'LL CONTACT THE AUTHORITIES AT EL MUERTE!



FORGET IT THEY'LL SHOOT YOU OR ME ON SIGHT!

ORAY THEN WE'LL REALLY PULL A KID ON EL MUERTE AND FORCE THEM TO DO WHAT WE SAY. HMM... I HAVEN'T BEEN OUTSIDE THE LAW A WEEK—AND ALREADY BEGUN TO THINK LIKE A CROOK!



**THE FOLLOWING DAY, AT EL MUERTE SILVER MINE...**

RAISE 'EM WHOEVER GOES FOR A GUN GETS SHOT!

CHUCK DEERING! (GASP)... THE BLACK DIAMOND! ... YOU'RE IN CAHOOTS!

TEMPORARILY! HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO.



**SHORTLY AFTER...**

YOU'RE NOT TAKING OUR SILVER? YOU'RE LOADING THE LOCKERS WITH ROCKS? WHAT KIND OF THEVERY IS THIS?

NO THEVERY AT ALL! WE'RE OUT TO CATCH A THIEF! WITH YOUR COOPERATION WE'LL SUCCEED!



**MOMENTS LATER, IN THE TELEGRAPH SHACK...**

SEND THIS OUT AT ONCE! TO SHERIFF HINTON OF CARIBE COUNTY! I WANT AN ESCORT OF DEPUTIES TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE LARGEST SILVER SHIPMENT EVER TO LEAVE OUR MINE! HE'S TO MEET THE DELIVERY WAGON AT BRONSON FORK!

FORK!



HINTON GOT THE MESSAGE! IF YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT HINTON-

I AM! A BAND OF OUTLAWS WILL ATTACK THE WAGON LONG BEFORE IT REACHES BRONSON FORK! WHEN IT DOES DEERING AND I WILL BE ON HAND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!



**ONE HOUR LATER, ON THE ROAD...**

NOT A SIGN OF HINTON! IT CAN'T BE THAT HE PASSED UP THIS OPPORTUNITY!

WAIT! THERE'S A STAGE-COACH COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION! NO COACH IS DUE AT THIS HOUR! DO YOU THINK...

YES, THAT'S IT, BUMPER! IT'S HINTON'S OWLHOOTS!

DRAW UP ALONGSIDE AN' LET 'EM HAVE IT! CROWD THE BEGGARS OFF THE ROAD!

QUICK! AFTER 'EM! WIPE 'EM OUT! GRAB THE SILVER!

EHEW!



**BUT THE MASKED RAIDERS RUSH GLEEFULLY FORWARD—**



**(GASP!)...IT'S THE BLACK DIAMOND!**

GET THIS STAGE OUTA HERE! I SEEN THE BLACK DIAMOND IN ACTION BEFORE! FORGET ABOUT THE OTHERS!



BUT AS A SUDDEN METALLIC SOUND REACHES THE MASKED LEADER'S EARS...

BOSS ARE YOU LOCO? I THOUGHT WE WERE YAMMOOSIN!

NOT-WHEN THE BLACK DIAMOND IS OUT OF/ AMMUNITION! BY THE TIME HE CAN RELOAD, I'LL SPREAD HIM FLAT ON THE PRAIRIE! GO, YOU DEVILS. GO!

CLICK!  
CLICK!  
CLICK!

SCHREEE

LOOK, BOSS! OUR BOYS ARE COMIN' DOWN FROM THE HILLS TO JOIN US!

GREAT! THE MORE HELP THE BETTER! WE GOT THE BLACK DIAMOND COLD! HE CAN'T ESCAPE! -AH, HE SEES US.

(GASP!)...BLACK DIAMOND! THEY GOT US!

NOT YET! WE'VE GOT ONE CHANCE... REALIAPON! EL LOBO! STOP THEM! QUICK!

WHINNY!

(GASP!)...THEY UNDERSTOOD! THEY'RE TURNING THE COACH HORSES... BUT WE'RE STILL LICKED! THEY'VE GOT MORE OWL-HOOTS COMING ON HORSES!

DEERING WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM! LET'S HANDLE THE BUNCH ON THE STAGE-COACH!

BANG! BANG!  
YEEEEE!  
UGGGH!

Y-YOU'RE RIGHT, B.D.! HERE COMES DEERING, HE'S HOPPING UP!

YAAAH!

D-DON'T SHOOT ... (GASP!)... WE GIVE UP!

BRR-TA-BAAAANNING

SHORTLY AFTER AS THE BLACK DIAMOND REMOVES A MASK FROM ONE OF THE CORPSES FACE...

IT'S HINTON, JUST LIKE WE THOUGHT YUH'RE CLEARER BLACK DIAMOND! NOBODY WANTS YOU NO MORE!

NOBODY EVER WILL! YOU BETTER REMEMBER THAT, TOO DEERING! A MASKED MAN CAN'T LIVE IN PEACE OR REST IN PEACE! -LIKE HINTON, ALL A CROOK GETS OUT OF HIS CRIMES IS A MOUND ON BOOT HILL.



(GASP!)...I HIT IT! AF-TER FORTY YEARS I HIT IT!! (GASP!)...

# FOOL'S GOLD!

STRING PECK AND BENNING HAD DECIDED TO CALL IT A DAY. THEY HAD BECOME SICKENINGLY UN-SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR STICKUPS AND HAD BEGUN TO HATE AND BLAME ONE ANOTHER FOR THEIR FAILURES. THEY WERE DRINKING A FINAL TOAST TO EACH OTHER'S ILL HEALTH WHEN THE BAT WING DOORS OF THE SALOON BURST OPEN...

HIT WHAT, YUH OLD GREASE-TAIL? WHAT'D YUH HIT?!

DON'T PAY OLD HANK NO MIND, MISTER! HE'S ALWAYS BUSTIN' IN WITH A BIG FIND THAT AIN'T WORTH A CONFEDERATE NICKEL!



YORE A LIAR, JIM HIGGINS! A BALD-FACED, CROSS-EYED LIAR!! I KNOW I AIN'T FOUND NOTHIN' TILL NOW BUT FOOL'S GOLD, BUT TODAY I HIT IT! I HIT IT, I TELL YUH!

OKAY HANK... SO YUH HIT IT. HAVE A DRINK ON THE HOUSE.



THINK I'M NUTS, DON'T YUH? SURE! I KNOW WHAT YORE THINKIN'! LOCO HANK! HE DON'T KNOW FOOL'S GOLD FROM REAL GOLD! FOR FORTY YEARS HE DUS UP NOTHIN' BUT DIRT AND ROOKS! BUT NOW I GOT ENOUGH GOLD DUST ON MY MULES TO BUY UP HALF OF CALIFORNIA!

PSSEET... STICK AROUND, KEEP AN EYE ON THE SOURDOUGH. I WANT A LOOK AT HIS MULES!



FOLKS SAY IF YUH KEEP AT A THING LONG ENOUGH... (HIC!)...YORE BOUND TO STRIKE PAY DIRT! WELL, I STRUCK IT!! STRUCK IT BIG!!

HMMM... IT'S HARD TO TELL IF IT'S GENUINE IN THIS LIGHT! IT LOOKS LIKE GOLD! BUT SO DOES FOOL'S GOLD!



THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO TAKE IT AN' DECIDE LATER! MEBBE THIS'S THE HAIL STRING, BENNING! AN' ME HAVE BEEN WAITIN' FOR?!



LATER THAT NIGHT, JUST OUT OF TOWN...

GITTIN' THE GOLD'S A CINCH! HOW DO WE ESCAPE WITH IT?!

HEAD FOR THE DESERT AN' TAKE THE PACK MULES WITH US! NOW QUIET! HERE COMES THE OLD BUZZARD NOW!



OKAY! TOGETHER!  
LET HIM HAVE IT!

HEARD

THE ONE RING



HE'S DEAD! GIT  
MOVIN'! THERE'S  
A CHANCE THEY  
MIGHT SEND A  
POSSE OUT, EVEN  
THOUGH WE ARE  
HEADIN' INTO  
THE DESERT!

WE'RE COMIN'  
PECK! - PESSY-  
BENNIN!  
WHAT DYUH  
THINK OF  
THIS DEAL?



I THINK PECK  
SEEN SOMETHIN'  
WHEN HE LOOKED  
INTO THEM BAGS!  
HE WOULDN'T  
WASTE NO TIME  
ON FOOL'S GOLD!

RIGHT! - WHICH  
GIVES ME ANOTHER  
IDEA! IF THIS  
HERE'S THE STICK-  
UP OF STICKLE,  
WHAT WOULD PECK  
WANT WITH US?  
SHARIN' THE GOLD,  
I MEAN? IS PECK  
A NATURAL-BORN  
SHARER?



HIM? PECK WOULDN'T GIVE ANNY ICE IN  
WINTER! WHY SHOULD PECK SHARE  
WITH US WHEN TWO BULLETS GITS RID  
OF TWO SHARES?!

THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKIN', BENNIN!  
SO RATHER THAN LET MY BACK  
CATCH A SLUG THE FIRST TIME I  
TURN IT TO PECK, I'M THINKIN' WE  
OUGHTA PROTECT OURSELVES!



'YOU'RE THINKIN'  
RIGHT! LET THE  
DOUBLE-CROSSIN  
SON-OF-A-GUN  
HAVE IT!!

GRAB THE LEAD  
MULE, BENNIN!  
I KNOW THE SAME  
SHORT CUT PECK  
DID!

LANG  
BANG



THET WAS A MILLION DOLLAR  
SHOT, BENNIN! A LEAD BULLET  
THEY COSTS A FEW CENTS  
AN' IT BROUGHT US A FOR-  
TUNE! GIDDAP! YUH, SONS OF  
SATAN! GIDDAP!

HIMM... IF KILLIN' PECK  
BRING STRING A FORTUNE  
... HE CAN DOUBLE HIS  
FORTUNE BY GITTIN' RID  
OF ME! STRING DON'T  
CARE NO MORE FOR ME  
THAN HE DONE FOR  
PECK!



OR I FUR HIM! I CAN DOUBLE  
MY TAKE BY KILLIN' STRING!  
THAT'S IT! - I'LL PLUG STRING  
THE FIRST CHANCE I GIT!

BENNIN'S AWELL QUIET! I WON-  
DER WHAT HE'S THINKIN'? IS  
IT WHAT I'M THINKIN'? HOW  
NICE IT WOULD BE IF THERE  
WAS NO BENNIN'?



LAR'BE HE IS THINKIN'  
THEY! WELL, I'LL OUT  
THINK BENNIN! I'LL  
BLAST HIM WHEN THE  
BLASTIN'S GOOD!

BY THE  
REACHED  
THE NEXT  
TWO MEN  
THAT  
THAT  
THE O  
MAN ST  
NOUGH

LATE  
ONE  
THEY  
MUS  
THA  
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OF

BY THE TIME THE SUN REACHED ITS ZENITH THE NEXT MORNING THE TWO MEN HAD ENTERED THAT BLAZING FURNACE THAT NATURAL OVEN THAT KNEW NO COOLING... THE DESERT/ EACH MAN, STRANGELY ENOUGH, HAD THE SAME THOUGHT!!

I'LL KILL HIM THE FIRST CHANCE I GET! THE FIRST TIME HE TURNS HIS BACK TO ME!

I'LL PLUG HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS! HE'S GOTTA LIE DOWN SOME TIME AN' CLOSE HIS FAT EYES!

BUT AS THE SUN GREW HOTTER AND HOTTER, STRING AND BENNING REALIZED THAT IN THEIR HASTE THEY'D MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE! THEY'D TAKEN ALONG NO WATER/ JUST THE FEW DROPS IN THEIR CANTEENS!!

THERE'S ANOTHER REASON TO CROAK THAT FAT HOGS! I NEED HIS WATER/ BUT I GOTTA WORK FAST! THE SOONER I KILL HIM, THE LESS HE'LL DRINK!

I WANT HIS WATER/ I WANT HIS GOLD AN' I WANT HIM DEAD/ LOOK THE OTHER WAY, STRING! LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN! LOOK FOR ANYTHIN' BUT THE BULLET YU'LL GET!



MEANWHILE, IN TOWN, THEY FOUND THE RIDDLED BODY OF OLD HANK...



IT MUST'VE BEEN THEM THREE COYOTES WHO WERE TANKIN' UP AT THE SALOON! JIM HIGGINS SAID THEY WAS GALLOW'S BAIT/ PORE HANK! HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM!

WAL THEM MURDERIN' BUZZARDS AIN'T GITTIN' AWAY WITH IT! WE'RE FORMIN' A POSSE! -WE'LL TRAIL EM STRAIGHT TO KINGDOM COME!!

LATER THAT DAY...

ONE THING IS SURE! THEM OWLHOOTS MUST BE CRAZIER THAN OLD HANK WAS! FOR FORTY YEARS HANK IMAGINED HE MADE A GOLD STRIKE! SOMETIMES HE FILLED HIS BAGS WITH ROCKS... SOMETIMES WITH SAND...

SHORE! BUT OLD HANK WAS SWEET AN' HARMLESS! KILLIN' HIM WAS LIKE KILLIN' A CHILD!



LATER THAT DAY AS THE SKIN-SHRIVELLING SUN CLAIMED THE PACE MILES...

(GASP!)... T-THEY WON'T GET UP STRING! (GASP!)... T-THEY'RE DYIN' ON US! -DYIN' WITH MILLIONS OF BUCKS WORTH OF GOLD ON THEIR RACKS!... W-WE'RE FINISHED, STRING! WE'RE FINISHED!!

NO FAT STUFF!! YORE FINISHED!!



I'M ON MY OWN! (GASP!)... GOT ENOUGH GOLD ON MY BACK TO RETIRE ON... AN' I'M GONNA MAKE IT TOO... (GASP!)... THEM BUZZARDS AIN'T GONNA PICK MY BONES...! N-NO!... NO!... NOT ME...! (GASP!)... I-I'M MAKIN' IT!



BUT BY SUNDOWN...

WE BEEN SPARED A TRIAL AN' A HANGIN'... HERE'S TWO SKELETONS! BUT WHERE'S THE THIRD?

MERSE IT'S WHERE'S THE FLOCK OF VULTURES IS RISIN'! C'MON!



AND IT WAS!! A THIRD SKELETON WITH BAGS TRAILING OUT BEHIND IT! BUT THE POSSE... UPON EXAMINING THE BAGS...



W-HOLY JUMPIN' NUGGETS! -S-SOLID GOLD!! (GASP!)... G-GOLD DUST/ TONS OF IT!...



YES, AFTER FORTY YEARS... OLD HANK... CRAZY OLD HANK... AND THOSE WHO ROBBED HIM... HAD FINALLY STRUCK IT RICH!!



# IN JUN JOE

## AND

# The Forked Stick

by "The Old Cowhand"



A bunch of us were lazing around the corral at the Double Bar-O ranch, about 20 miles north of Amarillo, one day back in July 1904. Things were pretty quiet as most of the boys and the bossman were away driving a big herd to market.

We hadn't had a bit of fighting trouble or anything since Black Diamond and Bumper had helped us drive the rustlers north. Yes sir, things were so doggoned quiet, that we were beginning to yen for some excitement or something.

Payday was still two weeks off so there wasn't much use to go to town. We were bored stiff, all of us.

Whilst we were chewing the fat, suddenly old Mark looked up, his face full of excitement, and yelled, "Whoopee—someone's riding in over the desert. Look at that dust yonder."

Sure enough this was no mirage for soon we could see the rider coming in, plain as a possum. It turned out to be no stranger, but our old pal, Black Diamond.

Boy, were we glad to see him. Of course we would have been glad to see anyone, but good old Black Diamond was a feast for sore eyes.

He was mighty welcome and just in time for chow. After we'd filled our bellies good and rolled ourselves a smoke out of the Bull Durham sack, we sat back and asked Black Diamond if he knew anything worth talking about. He did and told us an amusing yarn.

It seems he had been up in Goldfield, Nevada, the big boom mining town that everybody was talking about. The first real strike had been made only about a year ago right in the desert, and the town now had over 10,000 people and was growing crazy-like. There were already six or seven big mines in operation and thousands of claims staked out.

There was a lot of trouble in the town, what with mighty little law and some rough hombres from all over. Soon these sneaky devils found a clever way of stealing themselves a fortune—something new and unheard of in those parts—they called it "highgrading." These highgraders would take a job in the mines at \$5.00 a day. They could have gotten \$50.00 a day tending bar or shoeing horses.

But not for them—because you could only highgrade in the mines. This is the way they were working it.

All the mines in Goldfield were producing millions of dollars and every hour or so some miner would run onto a hunk of high grade ore—a small piece, size of a fire brick might assay up to a thousand dollars in pure gold. Sometimes a miner would come upon a real nugget of solid gold—worth \$5,000.00 or more.

Now it seemed a real shame to shovel this high grade ore into the company bins along with the regular ore. It seemed a lot smarter to hide these hunks of ore under their shirts and lug them off at the end of the day. Some guys even put on a woman's corset under their shirt and attached special pockets so they could lug off a lot of high grade ore.

It got so bad finally, that the company bosses decided to take steps to stop this stealing.

It was just at this time that Black Diamond was in Goldfield, and the big Florence mine hired him to put a stop to "highgrading."

The very first day, while he was searching for the hideout in the hills where the thieves were storing the loot, he ran onto an old Injun prospector who was looking for gold deposits with a forked stick—a divining rod.

You see there are many who believe that if you hold a forked ash stick horizontally out in front of you and walk slowly over likely ground, if there's gold underneath the surface, the stick will bend towards the earth.

While Black Diamond was talking with old Injun Joe—who comes along, but a couple of miners pulling a burro behind them. When they saw Black Diamond, somehow, they seemed to recognize him and turned sharp to beat it.

But the burro wouldn't budge.

Black Diamond got suspicious, when they decided to stay with the burro, instead of running for safety—and they acted mighty guilty.

"Walk over and see what they got," said Black Diamond to the Indian, "and I'll keep those rats covered."

Over goes old Injun Joe. The two strangers just stood there—as they had to, when Black Diamond had a bead on them with both six shooters.

"We ain't done a thing—not nothin' at all," exclaimed one of them. And they looked real innocent too. But just then old Joe's forked stick began to twitch and shiver, and it pointed right to the pack bags on the burro.

"Come quick, Black Diamond, come quick," yelled Injun Joe, excitedly. "I have found the stolen gold."

Black Diamond raced over, opened up the pack bags—and sure enough, they were filled with high grade ore and nuggets of pure gold, all stolen from the mine.

When they got the pack bags back to the assay office in Goldfield, they were found to be worth \$106,000.00—quite a haul.

The two highgraders were tried up in Tonapah and got two years—suspended. But the company was happy because it scared off the highgraders for a while, and they put Pinkertons in the mines to watch out.

And who do you think these highgraders turned out to be. Well, sir, two of the rustlers, Black Diamond had driven off the Double Bar-O six months before.



# COMANCHE WAR DRUMS



HEAVEN HELP US  
IF RELIAPON AND  
EL LOBO STUMBLE!

↳GASP! BLACK DIAMOND!  
L-LOOK WHAT'S AHEAD!

THEY SAY THAT BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER, BUT NOT WHEN THERE'S **BAD BLOOD** BETWEEN BROTHERS! AS IF BATTLING A MURDEROUS COMANCHE UPRISING WEREN'T TROUBLE ENOUGH, THE **BLACK DIAMOND** FINDS HIMSELF TRAPPED IN A WEB OF PASSIONS IN WHICH BROTHER IS PITTED AGAINST BROTHER IN A DUEL OF HATRED THAT CAN ONLY END IN DEATH AND DISASTER!

ONE BLAZING HOT AFTERNOON AT A SOUTHWEST ARMY OUTPOST, FORT ADOBE...

MAJOR! MAJOR TUCKER! QUICK! T-THE SUPPLY TRAIN IS HERE!

GOOD HEAVENS! ↳GASP! NOT ANOTHER ATTACK!!!

YUH MEAN WHAT'S LEFT OF IT?



YES, MAJOR! ANOTHER AMBUSH! AGAIN THEY GOT AWAY WITH MOST OF OUR SUPPLIES! ACCORDING TO LT. HARRIS, IT WAS THE SAME BUNCH! YOUR BROTHER! CLINT TUCKER!

CLINTS ADDED TO HIS BAND, MAJOR! THE SURVIVORS COUNTED AT LEAST TWENTY OWLHOOTS IN HIS PACK!



CLINT'S A NO GOOD CUTTHROAT! BUT WHY SHOULD HE PICK ON FORT ADOBE?

I CAN THINK OF A LOT OF REASONS, SIR! BUT WE'D BETTER NAIL HIM <sup>ON</sup> AND FAST! **WHATEVER** THE REASON! WITH TALK OF A COMANCHE UPRISING, HIS RAIDS COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!



THAT EVENING, NOT FAR FROM FORT ADOBE...

THEY'RE ALL DEAD INSIDE, BLACK DIAMOND! SAME AS IN THOSE OTHER RANCHES WE RAN ACROSS!



WE'RE IN FOR IT, BUMPER! EVERY NOW AND THEN, SOME COMANCHE HOT HEAD GETS VISIONS OF GRANDEUR, OF PUSHING THE WHITE MAN BACK BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI!

HE SEIZES ON SOME TRIBAL GRIEVANCE, LIQUORS UP HIS STUPIDEST YOUNG BUCKS AND GOES OUT ON A KILLING SPREE THAT LASTS ONLY AS LONG AS IT TAKES THE ARMY TO PUT DOWN HIS UPRISING! -- GET YOUR SHOVEL, BUMPER!

WE CAME HERE TO TRACK DOWN CLINT TUCKER... BUT WE'LL FORGET ABOUT THAT, BUMPER! THIS COMANCHE PROBLEM IS MORE SERIOUS! WE'LL HEAD FOR FORT ADOBE RIGHT NOW!

IF THERE'S A FORT ADOBE LEFT! THE MAY THESE INJUNS HAVE BEEN ACTING UP, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!



LATER THAT NIGHT AT FORT ADOBE...

MAN! THAT WAS SOME MEAL, MRS. TUCKER!

NO THANKS TO CLINT TUCKER! IF IT WAS LEFT TO MY BROTHER, CLINT, WE'D ALL BE FEEDING WORMS, NOT OURSELVES!

HOW'S THAT, MAJOR?

MY BROTHER CLINT WAS THE BAD APPLE IN THE FAMILY. IT'S AS IF HE'D BEEN MADE WRONG. HE STARTED WITH PETTY THIEVERY AND GAMBLING, THEN HE GRADUATED TO RUSTLING, HOLDUPS AND MURDER! I TRIED TO STOP HIM. NOT A CHANCE!

CLINT HATES SAM... BECAUSE OF ME!



CLINT FANCED HIMSELF IN LOVE WITH ME. HE WANTED ME TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM. BUT I LOVED SAM. WHEN I MARRIED SAM, CLINT WENT BERSERK. HE EVEN TRIED TO KILL SAM!

THAT'S TRUE, BLACK DIAMOND. CLINT WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO SEE FORT ADOBE RAZED TO THE GROUND!



WE'LL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE, UNLESS WE CAPTURE HIM! MAJOR, I KNOW CLINT TUCKER IS YOUR BROTHER, BUT TO ME HE'S A COLD BLOODED KILLER I'VE BEEN TRAILING FOR A MONTH!

YOU NEEDN'T EXPLAIN, BLACK DIAMOND. CLINT'S ATTACKS HAVE EXPOSED THE FORT AND SETTLEMENTS TO COMANCHE MASSACRE...



CLINT SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE ANY OTHER DESPERADO. YOU HAVE MY FULL COOPERATION IN TRACKING HIM DOWN AND DESTROYING HIM!

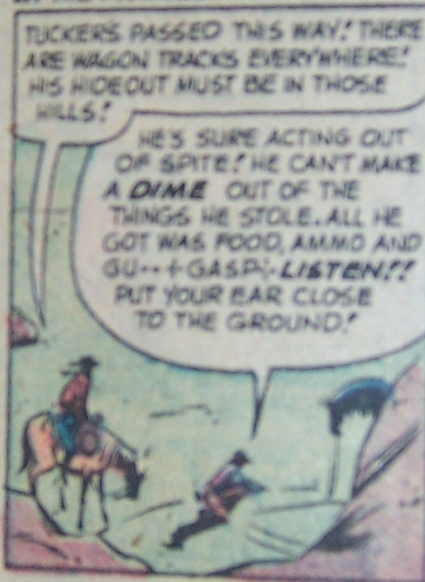
GOOD! BUMPER AND I ARE GOING AFTER HIM TONIGHT, MEANWHILE, ALERT THE SETTLEMENTS AND ASK FOR IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENTS!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING ON THE PRAIRIE...

TUCKER'S PASSED THIS WAY! THERE ARE WAGON TRACKS EVERYWHERE! HIS HIDEOUT MUST BE IN THOSE HILLS!

HE'S SURE ACTING OUT OF SPIRIT! HE CAN'T MAKE A DIME OUT OF THE THINGS HE STOLE. ALL HE GOT WAS FOOD, AMMO AND GUN-- + GASP! LISTEN!! PUT YOUR EAR CLOSE TO THE GROUND!



IT'S A LARGE BODY OF RIDERS, COMING THIS WAY!

WHERE THEY COME! THEY'RE COMANCHE!



RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE, BUMPER! HEAVEN HELP US IF OUR HORSES STUMBLE!

Y-YOU'RE TELLING ME! THEY'LL SKIN US ALIVE! -- GIT EL LOBO, GIT!!



THAT'S IT, BUMPER! PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN US. NO INJUN PONY CAN CATCH US ONCE RELIAPON AND LOBO HIT THEIR STRIDE!





WERE ALL RIGHT, BUMPER! WE'RE OUT OF THEIR RANGE NOW!

↑GASP↓ -- BLACK DIAMOND! LOOK W-WHATS AHEAD!



M-MORE COMANCHES!! ↑GASP↓  
---WE'RE CAUGHT IN A TRAP!!  
T-THEY'RE ALL AROUND US! T-THE DEVILS! THEY GOT US BOXED IN!



LET 'EM HAVE IT, BUMPER! WE WON'T GO TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS ALONE!

D-DON'T SAY THAT! I DON'T WANT TO GO THERE AT ALL!

SUDDENLY AS THE HOWLING COMANCHES GOT CLOSER...



IEEEE!

B.D.! ↑GASP↓ -- THEY'RE GOING DOWN, BUT NOT FROM OUR GUNS!

SOMEBODY ELSE HAS OPENED UP ON THEM!



↑GASP↓ -- BLACK DIAMOND! IT'S THE ARMY!

N-NO WONDER, BUMPER! PUT 'EM TO ROUTE! LET'S BLAST 'EM!

BAM

BAM



IT'S A GOOD THING I TOOK THE TROOP OUT ON MANUEVERS! THEY HAD YOU IN A VISE!

THEY'RE FOOLS! WHEN WILL THEY UNDERSTAND THAT KILLING A FEW HELPLESS SETTLERS AND STRAY RIDERS CAN DO NOTHING BUT GET THEM INTO TROUBLE!



THERE'S NO QUESTION NOW BUT THAT THE COMANCHES ARE OUT FOR BLOOD. NO-BODY'S SAFE OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE FORT! YOU'D BETTER COME BACK WITH US, BLACK DIAMOND!

NOT TILL WE HAVE A SHOWDOWN WITH CLINT TUCKER! HE'S HIDING IN THESE HILLS SOMEWHERE. I WON'T COME DOWN WITHOUT HIM! COME ON BUMPER!

HOURS LATER AT NIGHTFALL--



THEIR TRAIL LEADS RIGHT UP THIS MOUNTAIN, BUMPER. THEY'RE PROBABLY HOLED UP IN SOME CAVE.

WE HAVE OUR WORK CUT OUT, BLACK DIAMOND. ACCORDING TO THE MAJOR, CLINT'S GOT HALF AN ARMY WITH HIM!



IT'S THE BLACK DIAMOND! ALL RIGHT! SNEAK UP BEHIND HIM SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE. THEN WE'LL MOVE IN ON HIM!

OKAY, CLINT. C'MON, BOYS!

TEN MINUTES LATER--



!GASP! -- BLACK DIAMOND-- T-THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US! THEY SEEN US COMING!

WE COULD SHOOT IT OUT AND TAKE PLENTY OF 'EM WITH US! BUT I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA! WE'LL USE NATURE IN OUR DEFENSE!



WE'LL START A ROCK SLIDE! THEN WE'LL COME DOWN BEHIND IT!

CRACK



L-LOOK OUT!

!GASP!

IT'S A SLIDE!

IIIIIEEE!



THE POOR SLOB! THEY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT 'EM!

RUMBLE!



!GASP! -- DON'T SHOOT, BLACK DIAMOND! -- WE GIVE UP, -- WE'RE YOUR PRISONERS!

THEN THROW DOWN YOUR GUNS, TICKETS! THROW 'EM DOWN FAST!

SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE OUTLAWS HANGOUT...

GET YOUR HORSES, TUCKER. WE'RE RIDING BACK TO FORT ADOBE TONIGHT!

SO IT'S ALL OVER WITH ME, EH? WELL, IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER. EVERY BAD MAN COMES TO A BAD END... ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BLACK DIAMOND?



IT'S RIGHT IN YOUR CASE, TUCKER. YOU DESERVE HANGING TEN TIMES OVER. YOUR RAIDS ON ARMY SUPPLY TRAINS LEFT THE SETTLEMENTS EXPOSED TO COMANCHE RAIDS!

FUNNY! I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY. I FELT I WAS GETTING EVEN WITH MY BROTHER SAM. I HATED SAM! SAM STOLE THE GIRL I LOVED AND HE WINS EVEN IN THE END... GOOD-NATURED STUPID SAM! I GET HANGED AND HE GOES ON WITH DOLLY!



TWO HOURS LATER, ENROUTE TO FORT ADOBE...

BELIEVE IT OR NOT--THAT'S WHAT TURNED ME BAD. --LOSING DOLLY TO SAM! I LOVED DOLLY MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD! I'D HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE FOR HER!--AND SHE PREFERRED THAT STIFF-NECKED COLORLESS FOOL!

AS IT TURNED OUT, SHE MADE A WISE CHOICE! BETTER THE COLORLESS MAJOR THAN THE COLORFUL CUTTHROAT!



GASP! FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN!... BLACK DIAMOND... C-COMANCHEs ARE ATTACKING FORT ADOBE!!

THE FORTS AFIRE! HEAVEN HELP THE POST IF THOSE LIKKERED UP FOOLS BREACH THE STOCKADE!



DOLLY'S IN THERE, BLACK DIAMOND! I DON'T CARE A LICK FOR THE OTHERS --BUT THE GIRL I LOVE CAN'T... MUSTN'T... DIE! TAKE A CHANCE ON ME, BLACK DIAMOND! GIVE US BACK OUR GUNS! LET US FIGHT THE COMANCHEs!

ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU'D ONLY TAKE IT ON THE LAM!



NO! NEVER! NOT NOW! NOTHING MATTERS TO ME BUT THAT GIRL'S LIFE! OUR FIREPOWER COULD TURN THE TIDE. DON'T BE A FOOL, LAWMAN. IF NOT THE GIRL, THINK OF THE OTHERS IN THE FORT.



TAKE A CHANCE! THE FORTS IN A FIX IF YOU DON'T!

ALL RIGHT, TUCKER. YOU GET YOUR GUNS--DOUBLE CROSS ME AND YOU WON'T LIVE TO GLAD ABOUT IT!





**BUT MOMENTS LATER--**

SUCKER! THAT STUPID FRILL MEANS NOTHING TO ME! LET HER DIE FOR CHOOSING SAM INSTEAD OF ME! C'MON, BOYS! JOIN THE SLAUGHTER! AFTER ALL, IT'S US WHO PUT THE GUNS IN THOSE REDSKINS' HANDS!

† GASP † THE DIRTY--H--HE LIED!



HE'S BEEN RAIDING THE SUPPLY TRAINS IN ORDER TO SELL ARMY GUNS AND MUNITION TO THE CDMANCHES

WAIT A MINUTE, FORT ADOBE ISN'T DONE FOR YET! NOT WHILE THE WINDS BLOWING IN THE DIRECTION IT IS! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!



**SHORTLY AFTER IN THE SHADOWS OF FORT ADOBE--**

THERE HASN'T BEEN RAIN HERE IN A MONTH. THE PRAIRIE GRASS IS LIKE TINDER!

I GET IT! THE FIRE WON'T JUMP THE CLEARING AND REACH THE FORT. THE WIND WON'T LET IT!



YIIII EEEAAAA

IT'S WORKING! THEY'RE TURNING BACK!



MAJOR TUCKER, LOOK! THE BLACK DIAMOND HAS STARTED A PRAIRIE FIRE! THE REDSKINS ARE ON THE RUN!

IT'S A-A MIRACLE! WE'RE SAVED, DOLLY! WE'RE SAVED!



CLINT-- † GASP † -- CLINT! -- WE'RE TRAPPED! THE FIRES ALL AROUND US!!

N-NO! IT CAN'T BE--RIDE!--RIDE!!



NO! T-THERE'S NO WAY OUT-- --IT'S ALL AROUND-- YAAAAA!!!!



**THE NEXT MORNING--**

GOODBYE, BLACK DIAMOND-- WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, ESPECIALLY MYSELF! I HAD SOME SLIGHT FEELING THAT THERE WAS SOME GOOD LEFT IN CLINT-- BUT THAT'S ERASED NOW!

IT SHOULD BE, MRS. TUCKER. CLINT TUCKER WAS AS ROTTEN AS THE MAJOR IS FINE! HE FANNED THE FLAMES OF HATRED --AND DIED IN THOSE FLAMES-- AS HE DESERVED!



# RED FIRE'S DEATH DIVE!

WE WARNED YOU TO LAY OFF, KID! NOW YOU'RE GOIN' TO STAY DOWN THERE! THAT WAGON YOU WERE SO CURIOUS ABOUT—IT'S GOIN' TO TURN INTO DAVEY JONES' LOCKER—WITH YOU INSIDE IT!

(GASP!) S—STONEFACE SAM!... YOU'RE BEHIND THIS!!

CURIOSITY CAN TAKE A PERSON INTO THE UNLIKELIEST PLACES!—EVEN A MURDER MYSTERY AT THE BOTTOM OF A CREEK! THE TOUGH PART WASN'T GETTING IN TO A JAM! THE TRICK FOR REDFIRE WAS GETTING OUT OF IT...WHICH WASN'T TOO EASY WITH A DEEP CREEK SITTING ON YOUR HEAD AND THE TERRITORY'S WORST CUTTHROATS AT YOUR THROAT!



THE RODEO HAD COME TO TOWN AND THE WHOLE COMMUNITY—INCLUDING RED FIRE—HAD TURNED OUT TO SEE IT!

NOW JANE JOHNSON, WITHOUT HOLDIN' ON WILL PICK UP A NECKERCHIEF WITH HER TEETH! NOTE THE SPEED AT WHICH HER HORSE IS RACIN'!!

THAT GIRL SURE CAN RIDE, EH, WOLF?!



WOOOOF

JANE JOHNSON'S PERFORMANCE WAS MAGNIFICENT, BUT NOT EVERYBODY ON THE PREMISES WAS WATCHING IT!

YUH GOT EVERYTHIN' STRAIGHT, JOHNSON? YUH PLUG THE CASHIER...WHICH IS OUR SIGNAL TO CLOSE IN ON ANYBODY ELSE NEAR THE TICKET WAGON...

OKAY, BUT I'LL TOTE THE DOUGH. I DON'T TRUST YOU HOMBRES AS FAR AS I CAN HEAVE A HORSE!!



WE DON'T TRUST YOU, NEITHER, JOHNSON. SO WE'RE EVEN! JUST SHOOT STRAIGHT, AN RUN FAST...YUH'LL HAVE NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT!

I BETTER NOT! YOU DON'T KNOW ME WELL OR LONG... BUT I'M NOBODY TO DOUBLECROSS!!



SHORTLY AFTER, IN THE TICKET-WAGON...

OH! IT'S YOU, ED! WE GOT A LOTTA CASH HERE! CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL...

THAT'S RIGHT, BILL. I RECKON WE TOOK IN MORE TODAY THAN WE DID ALL WEEK. THOUGHT I'D DROP IN AN' SEE IF EVERYTHIN WAS ALL RIGHT...

THAT'S MIGHTY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, ED... BUT EVERYTHIN'S FINE! JUST FI-HEEE

SORRY, BILL! IT WAS YOU OR THE MONEY... AN' I LIKE MONEY MORE!

BANG BANG

B-BOSS! I HEARD SHOTS! FROM THE TICKET-WAGON!

S-SO DID I! SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG! BILL IS IN THERE ALONE!

QUICK! LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPE-BEEAAA

THE BOYS'RE ON THE JOB! THIS GIVES ME A PERFECT GET-AWAY!

BANG

THERE GOES JOHNSON! HE'S GOT THE DOUGH WITH HIM!

SCATTER - ALL OF YUH - LIKE WE ARRANGED! YUH KNOW THE MEETIN' PLACE!

MOMENTS LATER, AS THE STARTLED CROWD RUSHES TOWARD THE TICKET-WAGON -

(GASP!) T-THERE'S BEEN A SHOOTING!

NO-A HOLDUP! ...THEY JUST GOT AWAY!!

WHERE'S MY BROTHER? (GASP!) ED! ED! WHERE ARE YOU?!!

DON'T GO INTO THE WAGON, MISS JOHNSON. BILL'S LYIN' THERE, DEAD, YOUR BROTHER'S MISSIN'... COULD BE HE WAS TAKEN AS A HOSTAGE!

N-NO! (GASP!) T-THEY'LL KILL HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! FIND HIM! PLEASE, PLEASE! ... (SOB!) ...

THAT NIGHT, AS RED FIRE HEADS FOR HOME ACROSS GERMAN'S CREEK...

12 BRANDS! HEAD ANY-THING NEW ABOUT THE RODEO STICKUP?

JEST THAT THE SHERIFF THINKS ED JOHNSON WASN'T CAPTURED. THE SHERIFF THINKS JOHNSON WAS MIXED UP IN THE HOLDUP! HE SAYS NOBODY ELSE COULD GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO BILL, LESS IT WAS A FRIEND!

ANYWAYS, IT'S A TERRIBLE THING!  
THREE MEN DEAD, ONE MISSIN'  
THE KILLERS SKEDADDLED WITHOUT  
A TRACE... THE RODEO OUT A FAT  
BUNK OF RECEIPTS... TODAY SHORE  
WAS A BLACK DAY FOR THIS TOWN!

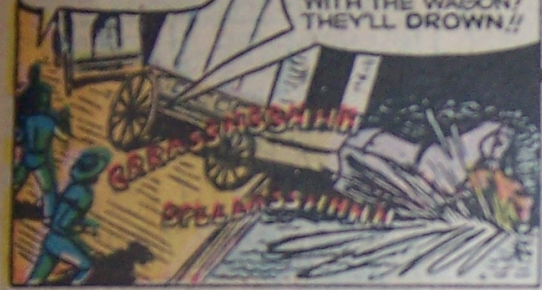


SUDDENLY, AS THE FERRY REACHES THE MIDDLE  
OF GERMAN'S CREEK



(GASP!)... THERE'S  
NOBODY ON IT!  
N-NO DRIVER!!

THOSE HORSES...  
(GASP!) T-THEY'LL  
BE DRAGGED DOWN  
WITH THE WAGON!  
THEY'LL DROWN!!



I-I-V E GOT TO FREE THEM!!



T-TAKE IT EASY, FELLER! (GASP)  
ONE MORE STRAP!



G-GRAMPS!... (GASP!)...  
I'M TAKING THEM A-  
SHORE!! I'LL MEET YOU  
ON THE OTHER SIDE!!

OKAY RED FIRE!!  
...JEST KEEP  
OUTA THE FER-  
RY LANE!



SHORTLY AFTER, ASHORE—

WHAT I DON'T GIT  
RED FIRE, IS WHAT  
HAPPENED TO THE  
DRIVER! WHERED  
HE DISAPPEAR TO?  
HOW COME HE AINT  
TURNED UP TO  
CLAIM HIS HOSSES?

MAYBE HE DOESN'T  
WANT TO CLAIM 'EM!  
MAYBE HE WANTED  
THE WAGON TO SINK!



BUT THEY DON'T  
MAKE SENSE!  
WHAT HAS ANY  
HOMBRE TO  
GAIN BY LOSIN'  
HIS WAGON?!

THAT'S THE MYSTERY,  
GRAMPS! THAT WAGON  
COULDN'T HAVE GONE  
OVER BY ACCIDENT!—  
IF THE OWNER TURNS  
UP LET ME KNOW.  
GRAMPS, IN THE MEAN-  
TIME I'LL STABLE  
HIS HORSES!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING...

I HEAR THE TOWN  
WANTS YOU TO FIND  
OUT IF THE SUNKEN  
WAGON IS A DERELICT—  
HOW'RE YOU GOING TO  
DO THAT, GRAMPS?

I GOTTA GIT SOMB-  
ONE TO DIVE DOWN,  
AN' SEE. BUT THEY AINT  
WHAT'S BOTHERIN' ME  
RED FIRE, TAKE A LOOK  
AT THIS MESSAGE I JUST GOT.



GRANDS I SWEET TROUBLE!  
TROUBLE AS DEEP AS THE WATER  
THAT WAGON IS LYING IN! LET ME  
SEE THIS BONES CHARACTER IN  
YOUR PLACE, I'LL TELL  
HIM I'M DOING THE  
DIVING!

Ferryman  
If you want to  
earn \$100 for  
nothing, ask me  
Bones at the  
Coronado  
at 10:00 A.M. be-  
fore you go diving  
Bones

SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE CORONADO  
SALOON—

DON'T TELL  
ME, KID, YORE  
THE FERRYMAN?

NO, I'M DIVING FOR  
HIM, WHICH ONE  
OF YOU IS BONES?

ME IT'S LIKE THIS, KID—  
WE DON'T WANT THAT  
WAGON RAISED,  
WE WANT  
IT ON THE  
BOTTOM...  
IN THE MUD.

WHY?

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GIVING  
YOU A HUNDRED BUCKS!  
DON'T DIVE... AN' NO  
QUESTIONS ASKED!  
JUST WRITE OUT A  
REPORT THAT THE  
WAGON IS LODGED IN  
MUD AN' AIN'T  
WORTH SALVAGIN'!

IT'S NOT EVERY  
DAY I CAN MAKE  
\$100 BY DOING  
NOTHING... IT'S  
A DEAL!

YORE A SMART  
LAD! RUN ALONG  
NOW AN' GIVE  
THE DINERO TO  
THE FERRYMAN!

I'M MORE CONVINCED  
THAN EVER THAT  
WAGON DIDN'T GO  
OVER BY ACCIDENT!  
IF HOMBRES LIKE  
BONES DON'T WANT  
IT RAISED THERE  
MUST BE SOMETHING  
IN IT THEY'D RATHER  
KEEP AT THE BOTTOM  
OF THE CREEK!

LATER THAT MORNING, IN THE  
MIDDLE OF THE CREEK...

BE CAREFUL, RED  
FIRE! IF IT'S A DEEP  
DIVE, COME RIGHT  
UP! WE GOT ENOUGH  
TROUBLE WITHOUT  
SOMETHIN'  
HAPPENIN'  
TO YOU!

DON'T WORRY,  
GRANDP! I  
JUST WANT A  
LOOK INSIDE  
THAT WAGON!  
IF I RUN INTO  
TROUBLE, I'LL  
YANK ON THE  
ROPE AND YOU  
PULL ME UP!

THERE IT IS!... LODGED  
IN MUD! C-CAN'T STAY  
DOWN LONG! I'M BE-  
GINNING TO FEEL THE  
PRESSURE IN MY EARS!

N-NOTHING DOWN HERE... NO MARKS... NO BULLET-HOLES... (GASP).  
T-THAT TRUNK! MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT!

YES,  
WITH  
THE V



C-C-C-C-CANT BUDGE IT!... (GASP!) I-ITS TOO HEAVY... I C-C-CANT DO ANYTHING (GASP!) WITH IT NOW!... W-W-WH- MY LUNGS ARE BURSTING! I-I-I-VE GOT TO SIGNAL GRAMPS!

SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE DOCK...

HEY, YOU! I TOLD YUH NOT TO DIVE! I GAVE YOU A HUNDRED BUCKS YOU SHOULDN'T DIVE! BUT I WATCHED YUH! YUH DOVE !!

WE HAD TO. GRAMPS COULDN'T LOSE HIS JOB FOR A MEASLY \$100. THE TOWN WOULD BE ON HIS NECK IF THE WAGON TURNED OUT TO BE A DERELICT! BUT YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WE'RE RECOMMENDING THAT THE WAGON BE LEFT THERE!

YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WE'RE RECOMMENDING THAT THE WAGON BE LEFT THERE!



WHY DIDN'T YUH SAY SO, I HAD YUH GUYS WRONG! I THOUGHT YUH WERE DOUBLE-CROSSIN ME!

NOW DO YOU SMELL A RAT ABOUT THAT WAGON, GRAMPS?

AH NOW! WE'LL RAISE THAT TRUCK TONIGHT, WHEN THEY CAINT SEE US!



THAT AFTERNOON, AS RED FIRE AND GRAMPS CONSTRUCT A CRUDE WINCH...

I-IM SORRY TO BOTHER YOU... BUT I MUST! MY NAME IS JANE JOHNSON. I WORK IN THE RODEO.



I REMEMBER YOU, TRICK RIDING!—ISN'T YOUR BROTHER...? I MEAN—HE'S DISAPPEARED, HASN'T HE? JUST AFTER THE ROBBERY...

YES, BUT YOU MUSTN'T THINK AS THE SHERIFF DOES... THAT ED IS MIXED UP IN THE HOLDUP! HE COULDN'T BE 'NOT ED'! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM EVERYWHERE! ONLY ONE PERSON SAW HIM! A STABLE-OWNER! HE SOLD A WAGON AND TEAM TO ED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON!



A-A WAGON?

YES, THERE WAS A THIN MAN WITH HIM WHEN ED BOUGHT THE WAGON...

A THIN MAN? UGLY, MUSTACHED, WITH LONG SPANISH SIDEBURNS!



YES, THAT'S HIM! HAVE YOU SEEN HIM OR MY BROTHER? I HEARD A WAGON WENT OFF THE FERRY LAST NIGHT! I THOUGHT POSSIBLY...MAYBE...DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I'VE GOT TO TRACK DOWN EVERY CLUE!

I UNDERSTAND MISS JOHNSON. GIVE ME THE NAME OF THAT STABLE-OWNER. I WANT TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT THAT WAGON LOOKED LIKE AND WHAT WAS INSIDE IT!



LATER, AT LOGAN'S LIVERY...

IF THE SKINNY ONE IS REALLY BONES TAGGERT, HE'S ONE OF THE STONEFACE SAM BELTON GANG! STONEFACE SAM HAS A BLOODY FINGER DIPPED IN ANY CRIME YOU CAN NAME AN' SOME YOU CANT!

HMM... THIS MYSTERY'S GETTING DEEPER EVERY MINUTE... AS DEEP AS THAT WAGON AT THE BOTTOM OF CHIRMAN'S CREEK!



BUT AS RED FIRE RETURNS TO GRAMPS' SHACK NEAR THE DOCK...

SURPRISED TO SEE ME, KID? DON'T BE, I GOT ANOTHER DEAL COOKIN'. I'LL GIVE YUH ANOTHER \$100 TO RAISE SOMETHIN' INSIDE THE WAGON / A TRUNK!

A TRUNK, EH? AND WHAT IF I REFUSE?



YUH WON'T KID! LUKE! BRING OUR PRISONERS IN!

I TOLD 'EM WE COULDN'T RAISE THE TRUNK, RED FIRE! THET IT WAS THE SHERIFF'S JOB TO DO THET!

HANG THE SHERIFF! WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THE LAW!



FIRST WORRY ABOUT US! GET 'EM, WOLF!

W-HEY!!

GERASHIKK!



(GASP!) G-GIT HIM AWAY FROM ME! ... H-HE'S CHAWIN ME U- YEEOWWWW



ALL RIGHT, BONES! NOW YOU RAISE 'EM/ GO BACK AND TELL STONEFACE SAM HE CAN GO STRAIGHT TO BLAZES / IF HE WANTS THAT TRUNK, HE'LL HAVE TO DIVE FOR IT HIMSELF!

OKAY, RED FIRE / Y-YUH JUST TOOK YORE PUST STEP TOWARD DYIN' YOUNG!

THAT NIGHT, NEAR THE BOTTOM OF OSERMAN'S CREEK...



BUT AS RED FIRE EMERGES FROM THE WATER...

(GASP!) S-STONE-FACE SAM!

I SEE YUH RECOGNIZE ME FROM MY WANTED POSTERS / LOOK, KID...

YORE LIKED! WE'RE HOLDIN GUNS ON YORE TWO PALS!! YORE BOXED IN... WITH A PINE BOY, YUH'LL DO WHAT WE SAY OR THEY GIT IT!



(GASP!) ... C-CAN'T FINISH KNOTTING THIS ROPE AROUND THE T-TRUNK! ... M-MY LUNGS ARE BURSTING! ... (GASP!) ... I-I'LL HAVE TO TIE THE KNOT ON THE NEXT DIVE!



MOMENTS LATER, AS BONES ROWS OFF WITH HIS TWO CAPTIVES...

WE'LL BE WAITIN' AT BIG ROCK! IF YUH DON'T SHOW UP IN A HALF HOUR, SAM, NOBODY'LL EVER SEE THESE TWO ALIVE AGAIN!

HEAR THAT, KID? THIS TOWN'S GONNA SUDDENLY LOSE THREE CITIZENS, INCLUDING YOU, IF THAT TRUNK DON'T COME UP PRONTO!— START DIVIN'!!



IF I COME UP WITH THAT TRUNK, I'M A DEAD DUCK! I'VE GOT TO FIGHT MY WAY OUT OF THIS TRAP! I'LL PRETEND I'VE GOT A CRAMP...



HEY! WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT'RE YOU COMIN' UP NOW FOR?

I-I GOT A CRAMP, STONE-FACE!... (GASP!)... I-IT'S DOUBLING ME UP (GASP!)... G-GIVE ME A HAND...



WHEEE

(GASP!)... HE WAS FAKIN'!

OKAY! NOW YOU GET THE TRUNK!!...



YUH DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSIN'—! (GASP!)...

YEEOWWW

BANG BANG



YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF, STONEFACE!!

AAAAIIIIII

BANG BANG



MINUTES LATER, AS THE FERRY NEARS LAND—

WHEN WE REACH THE DOCK, YOU'LL TURN YOUR BACKS TO ME! THEN WITH YOU SAFELY TIED UP, I'LL KEEP STONEFACE'S APPOINTMENT WITH BONES... MINUS THE TRUNK!!

STONEFACE WAS A FOOL! HE SHOULD'VE PLUGGED YUH WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE!!

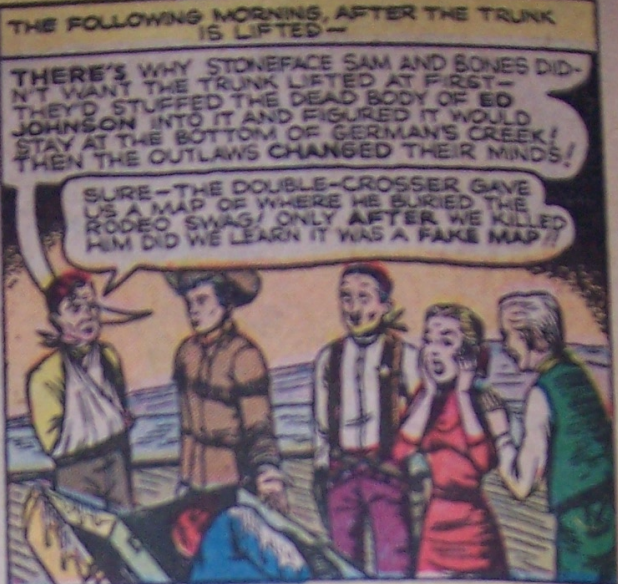


TEN MINUTES LATER... AT BIG ROCK...

ALL RIGHT, BONES, THROW 'EM UP!...

(GASP!)... I-IT'S THE KID... HE GOT AWAY FROM STONEFACE!... FOR GOSH SAKES, PLUG HIM!!...



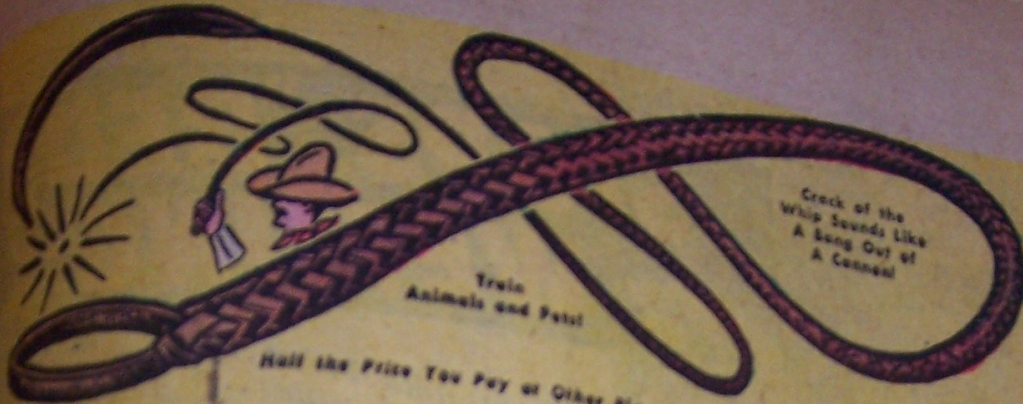


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THOMAS F. O'BRIEN, Business Mgr.  
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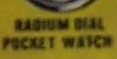
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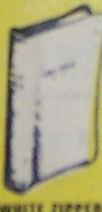
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TYPEWRITER



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UKULELE WITH RADIO BODY BODY PLAYER



RADIO RECEIVING SET FOR SCOUTS

## HERE'S HOW YOU GET YOUR PRIZES

Rush your name and address on coupon and we will ship AT ONCE PREPAID your first set of 24 richly decorated Mottos ON TRUST! When you have sold the 24 Mottos, send the \$8.40 you can secure your choice of many wonderful prizes. If you prefer to EARN MONEY, send \$6.00 and keep \$2.40. Hurry... send TODAY for 24 Mottos ON TRUST and big PRIZE CATALOG FREE!

# FREE!

## MEMBERSHIP in the FUNman's Fun Club

EXTRA! Sell mottos and send payment! within 15 days, and we'll give you FREE a year's Membership in the FUNman's Fun Club. Membership card, certificate, secret code, giant packet of fun materials all yours—PLUS many extra surprises!

The FUNman, Dept. M-137 - FREE BIG PRIZE CATALOG  
4545 N. Clark St., Chicago 40, Ill.

Please rush to me on credit 24 Religious Wall Mottos, to sell at the south. Also include big Prize Catalog FREE. I will remit amount required as explained under description of prize in BIG PRIZE CATALOG within 30 days and select the prize I want or keep a cash commission as explained.

NAME.....AGE.....

STREET or RFD.....

TOWN.....Zone.....STATE.....

**SEND NO MONEY... We Trust You!**